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SECTION 23.2 ACQUISITION OF MEETING AND CONFERENCE SPACE WHICH IS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, “GREEN FACILITIES”

For purposes of this section, the term “green” refers to a broad range of activities related to recycled content, energy and water efficient, biobased, environmentally preferable and non-ozone depleting substances, products and services. Green facilities should be able to demonstrate some level of commitment to conserving natural resources by applying environmentally sustainable principles in the meeting and convention industry.

23.2.1 Purpose

In 1997, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) was amended to support Federal procurement of green products and services. Executive Order 13101 directs Federal agencies to identify and give preference to the purchase of green products and services that pose fewer environmental burdens. The purpose of this section is to promote and provide guidance on the consideration of the environment in purchasing meeting and conference services and facilities. This section provides guidance for:

- A) the acquisition of green facility space for use in conducting meetings or conferences planned or funded by EPA;
- ===== B) utilization of a checklist to identify green attributes of service providers; and
- C) incorporation of contract terms when environmental responsibility is considered in the award decision.

This guidance is intended to facilitate EPA’s green meetings initiative. It is intended to provide a framework to assist requisitioners in identifying and differentiating levels of environmental commitment and responsibility among various service providers. The attached Green Facility Checklist provides a tool to assist in determining the green attributes of meeting and conference space providers. When the acquisition is anticipated or expected to exceed the micro-purchase threshold, Agency personnel responsible for procuring meeting and conference space must consider the green aspects of a facility prior to purchase.

23.2.2 Background

Executive Order (EO) 13101 requires Federal agencies to consider, as part of acquisition planning as well as in the development of statements of work and specifications, a broad range of factors. These include the "elimination of virgin material requirements, use of biobased products, use of recovered materials, reuse of products, life cycle cost, recyclability, use of environmentally preferable products, waste prevention (including toxicity reduction or elimination), and ultimate disposal."

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In 2002, EPA established a plan for the implementation of EO 13101. The plan includes goals to increase and promote recycling, reduce materials entering waste streams, promote and achieve increased preferential use of materials with recycled contents, and emphasize and increase the purchase and use of environmentally preferable products. The goals will be accomplished by implementing green initiatives in the following categories:

- ▶Green Buildings
- ▶Green Janitorial and Maintenance Services
- ▶Green Copy Paper and Publications
- ▶**Green Meetings**
- ▶Green Office Supplies
- ▶Green Electronics
- ▶Green Fleets
- ▶Green Landscaping
- ▶Green Power
- ▶Recycling and Waste Prevention

23.2.3 Authority/Applicability

The authority for the green initiatives is derived from Executive Order 13101, Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition (1998). This guidance is applicable to all purchases of facility space for meetings and conferences, and **is mandatory for acquisitions over \$2,500.00**. For purchases under \$2,500.00, including those acquired through use of a purchase card, acquisition personnel should strongly consider application of this guidance. The attached Green Facility Checklist (Appendix 23.2A) shall be used as appropriate.

23.2.4 Policy

It is EPA policy to procure meeting and conference space from environmentally responsible providers. It is also EPA policy to promote the greening of the conference/hotel industry by providing a demand for green conference space. Accordingly, procurement officials shall utilize the tool, Green Facility Checklist (Appendix 23.2A), as appropriate for individual procurements over \$2,500.00, to further implement the Agency green meeting initiative. The tool shall be used to conduct market research or it shall be adapted for use as a criterion to be evaluated in the solicitation of meeting and conference space providers in awarding purchase orders and contracts. The checklist shall not be used for purposes other than market research or as an evaluation criterion as any other use is not covered by an approved Information Collection Request (ICR).

23.2.5 Conducting Market Research Using the Green Facility Checklist

Market research takes place before a firm requirement exists, and it may be conducted by program personnel, acquisition personnel, or both. Market research should be conducted to the maximum

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extent practicable, in accordance with market research methods and procedures as identified in the FAR Part 10. Market research should be conducted prior to developing new requirements documents for an acquisition. Once a requirement has been documented, market research shall not be performed as the research could be construed to be part of the solicitation/evaluation process. (See paragraph 23.2.5.1, below.) Because EPA routinely contracts for meeting and conference space, market research is ideal for this type of service. Market research should be used to identify providers of meeting and conference space that incorporate environmental considerations into their day-to-day operations.

The checklist contains 18 questions designed to reveal the environmental commitment of meeting and conference space providers. Agency personnel may utilize this checklist, in whole or in part, to conduct market research. Use of the checklist shall be utilized for acquisitions over \$2,500 when conducting market research. The checklist may be mailed to potential providers, or verbal responses may be solicited. It is not necessary for all questions to be answered affirmatively for a provider to be considered environmentally responsible. Likewise, a provider who answers more questions affirmatively than another provider does not necessarily receive preferential consideration. Rather, market research results should be utilized to determine the universe of meeting and conference space providers who demonstrate environmentally responsible business practices. When a requirement arises, potential offerors within that universe should be solicited, and their proposals evaluated, as appropriate for the procurement, i.e. lowest cost, best value, etc.

23.2.5.1 Use of the Green Facility Checklist as Evaluation Criteria

In addition to utilizing the green facility checklist to conduct market research, Agency personnel may use the checklist to develop green evaluation criteria for formal consideration in the award of Agency contracts and purchase orders. Use of the checklist in this manner is mandatory for contracts and/or purchase orders which exceed the micropurchase threshold, especially for contracts awarded solely for conference/meeting and logistics support, or large mission contracts which include conference support requirements.

Any of the individual questions on the checklist shall be used as a technical evaluation criterion in competitively negotiated acquisitions. It is also acceptable to craft a criterion which combines components of several of the questions and permits the offerors to provide EPA with a statement of environmental efforts.

As with any formal evaluation factor, if it is determined that a green evaluation factor is appropriate for use in a solicitation, section M of the solicitation must specify how the green criterion will be scored. Acquisition personnel should follow the guidance at FAR 15.305. A green evaluation factor must be identified and evaluated as any other factor, consistent with FAR Part 15.

23.2.5.2 Additional Tools for Use in Procuring Environmentally Friendly Meeting Facilities

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There are many industry tools available to assist with the purchase of buying green products or services. Contracting officers and contracting officers' representatives are encouraged to view internet sites such as, but not limited to, www.bluegreenmeetings.org, when considering buying green products or services. This site is not a mandatory source, but rather is a tool which can provide helpful information and assistance.

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Attachment 23.2A Green Facility Checklist

1. Does the contractor have property in an environmental partnership or certification program, such as Energy Star (Green Lights), Green Seal, Green Globe, Buy Recycled Business Alliance, Waste Wise, GreenLeaf (Canada), WAVES, or any other?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, indicate which one(s). _____

2. Are efforts to protect the environment visibly communicated to guests, shareholders, vendors, and the public?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, indicate what is communicated. _____

3. Is energy efficient lighting used in the facility?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, indicate where (circle all that apply), such as lobby, hallway, exit signs, public restrooms, offices, meeting rooms, outdoor areas, guest rooms, or any others. _____

4. Are occupancy sensors or timers used to control lighting in intermittent-use area?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, indicate where (circle all that apply), such as meeting rooms, storage area, public bathrooms, staff bathrooms, or any others. _____

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5. Are programmable, thermostats with motion detectors used to control HVAC in guestrooms?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

6. Are refillable amenity dispensers used rather than individual bottles for bathroom amenities?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

7. Has the facility established an active recycling program for both the visible guest areas and the internal working areas?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, indicate where (circle all that apply), such as lobby, near vending machines, elevator landings, conference rooms, kitchen, front desk, front office, staff facilities, guestrooms, or any others. _____

Indicate all materials included in the active recycling program (circle all that apply), such as: aluminum, plastic, steel, glass, cardboard, mixed paper, hangers, toner cartridges, food waste, batteries, or any others. _____

8. Has packaging been reduced by: (1) utilizing reusable versus disposable goods ☐, (2) purchasing food, beverages, and supplies in bulk where possible ☐, (3) requiring vendors to take back pallets and crates ☐?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, check all that apply and identify any other reductions. _____

9. Does the facility utilize environmentally responsible cleaners (MSDS Health Hazard Rating 1 or less) throughout the entire facility?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

10. Does the facility use an integrated pest management approach for structural and landscape pest management?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

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11. Is air filtration in place or available in guestrooms?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

12. Have low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) products been used on property?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, circle VOC products used and identify any others: paint, adhesives, carpeting, air fresheners. _____

13. Does the facility offer a reuse option for linen, towels, or sheets to multiple night guests?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, circle options and indicate any others. _____

14. Does the facility use water conserving fixtures, such as: (1) 1.5 gallons per minute (gpm) faucet aerators ☐, (2) 2.5 gpm showerheads ☐, (3) 1.6 gallons per flush toilets ☐?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, check all that apply and indicate any others. _____

15. Do the housekeeping and engineering departments have active systems to detect and repair leaking toilets, faucets, and showerheads?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

16. Does the facility use paper bleached products without chlorine and/or made with the following minimum post-consumer recycled contents:

- (1) office paper 30% post-consumer recycled content ☐,
- (2) glossy printed material 10% post-consumer recycled content ☐,
- (3) bath tissue 50% post-consumer recycled content ☐,
- (4) facial tissue 20% post-consumer recycled content ☐,
- (5) napkins and paper towels 60% post-consumer recycled content ☐?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

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If yes, check all that apply and indicate any others. _____

17. Does your facility purchase products that contain recycled contents, biobased materials, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and/or are environmentally preferable?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, give examples of the products purchased. _____

18. Does your facility give preferences (i.e., contract with) in the selection of environmentally responsible service providers of renewable energy, integrated pest management, alternative fuel, or any others?

☐ Yes or ☐ No

If yes, circle all that apply and indicate any others. _____
